

Church Membership Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all who join our fellowship do so prayerfully, with understanding, and in unity of spirit. Membership in a local church is both a privilege and a responsibility. We believe it is important that new members understand who we are, what we believe, and how we seek to walk together as the body of Christ.

1. Period of Visiting and Discernment

- We ask all visitors to attend for several weeks before making a decision about membership.
- During this time, we encourage prayer and personal discernment to determine whether the Holy Spirit is leading them to make this their church home.
- This period allows new individuals or families to experience our fellowship, worship, and values before committing.

2. Membership Orientation

- During the visiting period, leaders will meet personally with inquirer(s) to:
 - Explain the vision, values, and biblical foundation of our church.
 - Outline the responsibilities and opportunities of membership.
 - Answer questions regarding doctrine, leadership, or ministry structure.
- Everything in our fellowship is voluntary. We do not pressure anyone to perform or to join, but we believe clarity and transparency are essential for healthy relationship.

3. Spiritual Readiness and Prior Relationships

- We ask that those considering membership do so out of a clear sense of calling and peace from the Holy Spirit, not merely preference or convenience.
- Members should be in good standing and peace with their former church whenever possible.

- Those leaving a previous church because of unresolved conflict should first seek reconciliation (Matthew 5:23–24; Romans 12:18).
- Exceptions: In cases of spiritual abuse or unhealthy leadership, we welcome individuals seeking healing without requiring reconciliation that would cause further harm.

4. Congregational Affirmation

- It is our desire to welcome anyone who is a follower of Jesus to join, however, we meet in small groups at privately owned homes. This is very different than more open, public meetings that many churches are styled after. We need to be sensitive to the needs of everyone in our community. Because of this, anyone who wishes to join a house church will need to be patient and willing to work through a process to see if this is the right place for them. Every church and individual is different, and we will collectively use our best judgment in each case to decide whether someone should become a part of a house church.
- Once these steps are complete and both the individual(s) and leadership sense unity, the candidate(s) for membership are presented to the congregation.
- The final decision to receive new members is made collectively by the church, not unilaterally by the pastor.
- This process reflects the New Testament model of shared discernment and community affirmation (Acts 6:3–6; Acts 13:2–3).

5. Expectations of Members

Membership involves both belonging and participation. We encourage each member to:

- Cultivate a personal walk with Christ through prayer, Scripture, and obedience.
- Participate faithfully in worship, fellowship, and the life of the church. This includes taking time to develop relationship and friendship with others in your church. (Hebrews 10:24–25).
- Pursue unity by walking in humility, forgiveness, and love toward others (Ephesians 4:1–3).

- Serve according to one's gifts for the building up of the body (Romans 12:4–8; 1 Peter 4:10–11).
- Support the church's mission through prayer, volunteer involvement, and financial giving as God leads (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- Submit to godly leadership and accountability in keeping with Hebrews 13:17, while leaders in turn commit to serve the flock with integrity, humility, and transparency.
- Represent Christ well in daily life, demonstrating His character and love to those inside and outside the church (Matthew 5:14–16).

6. Biblical Foundation

This policy is rooted in Scripture's teaching that the church is a covenant community of believers:

- *Acts 2:42–47* — Believers devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, and prayer.
- *1 Corinthians 12:12–27* — The church is one body with many members, each vital and interconnected.
- *Ephesians 4:11–16* — The body grows and matures as every part does its work in unity and love.